

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Message from the Mayor

I'm proud to say that our efforts to improve literacy in the District of Columbia are swiftly moving forward, as we work in partnership with the private sector and other sectors of our city to find creative and effective ways to increase our city's literacy rate.

On August 5, city leaders and partners at the Carlos Rosario International Learning Center in Northwest launched the new Lifelong Learning Initiative, a group effort to improve literacy among adults and bring new resources and accountability to literacy programs through the District.

This initiative takes a bold new approach to adult education, because adult learning means more than simply helping people learn to read. The Lifelong Learning Initiative programs are specially designed to equip our residents for the future. Our goal is to help men and women throughout our city acquire work, civic and other skills that will help them at home and at work.

The Lifelong Learning Initiative is a citywide transformational effort with an ambitious target: to help 10,000 city residents achieve their learning goals over the next three years.

The program will also increase access to adult literacy services, and increase the quality of those services, while placing "Lifelong Learning" coaches at organizations throughout the city.

Literacy program providers throughout the city are adopting the National Institute for Literacy's groundbreaking *Equipped for the Future* curriculum. Equipped for the Future is a functional learning approach designed specifically for adults. Equipped for the Future will help adult learners gain skills they need to achieve their personal goals—whether it's as life-changing as getting that first job, as liberating as understanding a bus schedule, or as profound as helping a child learn to read. We are also working to open new centers in areas of greatest need. These new centers will be bright, attractive environments, like Carlos Rosario.

We have many partners supporting the new Lifelong Learning Initiative. Partners including the Fannie Mae Foundation, Verizon, Comcast, McKissack and McKissack, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and Washington Sports and Entertainment have committed resources and professional expertise in support of the initiative. In addition, many local media outlets, including Clear Channel and Viacom, are supporting a "Read Out Loud" public service campaign by donating valuable airtime and space for television, radio and print advertising.

Adults in the District of Columbia can learn more about low-cost and free learning centers to help them with reading, math, computer, General Educational Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) skills by calling a toll-free number, 1-866-READ-OUT, or visiting www.readoutloud.org. This initiative is truly a group effort—and I'm confident that it will be testament to what we can accomplish as a city when we work together.



Keely Boxing and Youth Center

On July 22, I delivered remarks introducing the new Keely Boxing and Youth Center to the District and discussing the positive impact the center will have on our city.

Keely Boxing and Youth Center is now one of our city's premier anti-gang and anti-youth violence centers. Working with at-risk youth, the center has a mission not only to decrease the incidence of youth-related crime, but also to transform these at-risk youth into productive members of our society.

The Keely Center is more than just a place where kids can come and trade punches. Open to youths between the ages of 8 and 18, it will also help youths with school work, computer training and basic life skills.

Former boxer and community organizer Keely Thompson, who heads up the center, should be recognized by our city for his vision and his hard work to bring this center to the community. Some of our readers may know that Keely Thompson was the International Boxing Council's lightweight title champion from 1990 to 1994. But he is a heavyweight in his effort to transform the hearts and minds of our youth.

I think Keely said it best recently in an interview when he said, "Kids are our future, and these kids need something." I would take his statement a bit further and say that our entire city needs something. The Keely Center is something that we all will benefit from and it will be a great service to the city.

The center is already servicing about 450 youths in the boxing training program. Nearly 150 of those youths were previously in gangs at one time. Already, we are witnessing the impact the center is having on gang participation and violence. I encourage you to visit the Keely Youth Center at 1459 Columbia Road, NW.

Community Profile

Jeremy Daniels

Jeremy Daniels, a native Washingtonian and graduate of Calvin Coolidge Senior High School, has been a regular volunteer at the Fourth District Police Station and Amvets Thrift Store for more than five years. He has accumulated more than 1,500 volunteer hours. He started volunteering at the police station at age 12 and says his time there has made him appreciate and respect the job of a police officer.

"I have overcome many obstacles and being involved in the community has played a major part in that," Jeremy, a Ward 4 resident, said. "As long as people are willing to treat others the way they want to be treated, our community can go a long way."



He says that his grandmother and mother taught him the importance of helping your neighbors and giving back to the community. Jeremy says he remembers running errands for elderly neighbors when he was 6 years old. He still helps his elderly neighbors by walking their dogs, cleaning their yards, or being a companion.

In 2000, Jeremy volunteered for Adrian Fenty's Campaign for DC Council, which gave him a "sense of pride and honor because [he] knew it would benefit [his] community." Other accomplishments include becoming a captain in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and being recognized for his outstanding community service his freshman year at Calvin Coolidge. An aspiring veterinarian, Jeremy has also volunteered at the Caroline Animal Hospital and works as a veterinary assistant at the Kenwood Animal Hospital. Jeremy will attend Delaware State University in the fall.

"Jeremy is truly an extraordinary young man," said Kathleen L. Dougherty from the Kenwood Animal Hospital.

Jeremy is the April youth winner of the Mayor's Community Service Award, sponsored by Serve DC. If you would like to nominate a youth or adult for the monthly award, visit <http://serve.dc.gov> for nomination information or call (202) 727-9461.



New Playground for Sursum Corda

We had a great day in the Sursum Corda neighborhood of Northwest on July 22.

I was joined by representatives from The Home Depot, AmeriCorps, and playground firm KaBOOM! to build a new playground in one day. Volunteers helped us assemble a playground from the ground up. This new playground will serve more than 450 children who live in the area.

The playground—made possible by a partnership among The Home Depot, AmeriCorps, the DC Housing Authority, National Capital Police Fund, community volunteers and organizers from KaBOOM!—will give the children who live in Sursum Corda a new, safe place to play.



The playground design was created with input from children in the community who attended a "Design Day" event in June.

The volunteers who worked so hard on July 22 should be commended. They worked their hearts out in service to our city.

As some of our readers may know, I designated the Sursum Corda community as one of 14 crime "hot spots" around the city. That means that not only did our Metropolitan Police Department provide more police patrols and vigorous enforcement in the area, but we brought the full force of the rest of the government behind them.

This can help ensure streets are clean; blighted buildings are boarded up; social services are coordinated; and the community is engaged. City Administrator Robert Bobb is driving this effort to ensure the MPD and the rest of the government have the support and focus they need to turn these neighborhoods around.

Our work on the playground in Sursum Corda symbolizes a great partnership, and a great day for our city.

Ex-Offender Reentry Program

I had the privilege on July 20 to serve as the master of ceremonies at the launch of an innovative new program, "Project Empowerment Plus," at 609 H Street, NE. This creative program will provide broad help for ex-offenders returning to the Washington, DC community to help them transition into functioning members of society.

Each year 2,500 ex-offenders return to our city looking for jobs and a stable lifestyle. When they are unable to find jobs, some turn back to criminal careers with renewed energy—contributing to the cycle of crime in our city. We need to turn this trend around.

As a community, we need to create alternate opportunities for ex-offenders that not only address their employment needs, but also their social services and life needs.

The goal of Project Empowerment Plus is to transition 205 ex-offenders into sustainable unsubsidized employment and for them to achieve financial self-sufficiency. The participants will receive case management, life skills training, pre-employment training, employment assistance, and other services vital to this transition. The program is supported by a generous \$2 million grant from the US Department of Justice.

Most ex-offenders released from prison face a multitude of challenges extending beyond the need for employment. What is needed is a holistic partnership among government forces to help ex-offenders. That's why Project Empowerment Plus is a partnership between the Court Services and Supervision Agency (CSOSA), the Department of Employment Services, and several city human service agencies.

I hope that Project Empowerment Plus will be successful as a pilot program so that it can be expanded and replicated throughout the country to serve some 600,000 ex-offenders who are released from jails and prisons across the United States.

For more information on the program, please visit the Department of Employment Services website at: <http://does.dc.gov>.



Capitol Gateway Bricklaying Ceremony

On July 22, I joined a host of local leaders to celebrate a bricklaying ceremony to commemorate the ongoing construction of Capitol Gateway, a new 151-unit apartment complex for the elderly at 58th and Blaine Streets in Northwest.

The District's \$30.8 million "HOPE VI" grant for Capitol Gateway, funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2000, provides much needed financing for the redevelopment of two public housing developments: East Capitol Dwellings and Capitol View Plaza.

The new 151-unit senior building is the first phase in the Capitol Gateway development, which will include more than 760 rental and homeownership units that will serve a range of incomes. The senior building will contain 40 assisted living units. The assisted living units are a new undertaking for the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA).

The new development will also offer new retail and job opportunities through the neighborhood's first full-service supermarket, and a variety of retail shops. They will be housed in a commercial center within walking distance of the new senior building. The District has now received six federally-funded HOPE VI awards, which total \$140 million. And the District is a national leader in the design and execution of innovative and successful HOPE VI developments.

Since 1999, our government has invested \$2 billion citywide to produce more than 15,000 affordable housing units. In Ward 7, we've invested more than \$160 million since 1999 to produce 3,750 units of affordable housing.

Our goal is simple: We must keep our affordable housing stock growing as our city's population grows. As it grows, we will support future homeowners with financial credits and community programming: Through our housing agencies, residents can get an incentive to buy or renovate a home in DC. Residents can take a free home buying seminar in their community. And the "city living, dc style!" campaign is beginning its second year—a clearinghouse for everything about home ownership in DC. You'll hear more about the expo soon.

DPW Employee Johnny Harrison

On July 26, I delivered remarks honoring the memory of DC Department of Public Works employee Johnny Harrison, who died in a work-related accident on Macomb Street in Northwest on July 16. He was much beloved among friends and colleagues.

Johnny Harrison began his career with the Department of Public Works as a Motor Vehicle Operator with the Street & Alley Cleaning Division on October 20, 1997. Mr. Harrison was promoted to a Sanitation Crew Chief on March 11, 2001, with the Solid Waste Collection Division.

Johnny got along with all of his co-workers. He was an outstanding employee, always giving 110 percent in whatever he was doing. Coworkers say he always returned to the office asking his boss every day, "Are we okay, Chief?" He worked whenever or wherever he was needed—whether it was snow, trash, bulk pick-up or any special event.

At the funeral, I conveyed my heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and co-workers of Johnny Harrison. It is never easy to bid farewell to someone who was loved and respected by so many. It is even more difficult when we lose a public servant the way we lost Johnny Harrison.

He was an invaluable member of the DC Snow Team, putting in overtime hours so that his children could attend college. He was a man who pulled people together at our Department of Public Works to get the job done.

The Cleveland Park Historical Society has established a fund for Mr. Harrison's family. Anyone who would like to make a donation for Mr. Harrison's family should send a check to:

Cleveland Park Historical Society
PO Box 4862
Washington, DC 20008

Checks should be made out to the Cleveland Park Historical Society with a notation that the contribution is for the Cleveland Park Historical Society Harrison family fund.



District Activities



Mayor Williams and Michael Kelly, executive director of the DC Housing Authority, staged a "wood cutting," and sawed through to the grand opening of a Sursum Corda Playground at Sibley Plaza in Northwest on July 22.



On Monday, August 2, Mayor Williams joined a host of city officials, including Councilmember Sharon Ambrose and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, to protest the decision by the Capitol Police to close First Street, NE between D Street and Constitution Avenue.



On Tuesday, August 3, District of Columbia residents, business owners, civic leaders and young people joined Mayor Williams and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) in celebrating the 21st annual National Night Out against crime.

Community News

- [Mayor Announces New Appointees](#)
- [Traffic Restrictions in Effect beginning August 3](#)
- [DC Selected second best city to live in for African Americans](#)

[View All News Releases](#)

Upcoming Events

8/7	Free Concert by Tito Puente, Jr. 12:30 pm Lincoln Memorial
8/7 to 8/15	Sales Tax Holiday From 8/7 until midnight 8/15 For clothing, accessory items, and school supplies under \$100
8/14	Neighborhood Corps Forum 10 am – 3 pm DC Convention Center 801 Mt. Vernon Place, NW Meeting Room 144
8/18	Latino Family Fair 11 am – 6 pm 3100 block of Hiatt Place (between Irving and Park Rd)
9/2	Elderfest 10 am – 3 pm Freedom Plaza Pennsylvania Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets, NW

